

CEREBUS GOING HOME 22

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253
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ADDENDA

continued from last issue

Don't believe I was bawled out or scolded at all on Friday. Next was the violent outburst at the table Saturday noon May 30th. Took no notice of it and obtained a quiet afternoon and pleasant evening with storm raging outside.

No bawling out in the night. Awake at 5 a.m. checking house. Storm of a tropical disturbance moving North-west into the Gulf of Mexico.

Scolding and bawling out came with the morning mail when I was asked to read a letter from Carl Brandt and made the mistake of saying Brandt was mistaken when he said that neither he nor Mrs. Hemingway knew of any negotiations with *Look*. These had been initiated by *Look* four or five months before and Mary and I had many times discussed them their disadvantages etc. What was true and correct was that we had no commitments */sic/* with books when Mary sent Brandt the samples from the diaries. But they had been making offers for several months.

The trouble is that I see no way of avoiding those terrible angry outbursts. They used to be almost always in private and there were long intervals between. Sometimes months. Very often I deserve to have it done without rages or false accusations. They are no help.

I have tried being as good as I know how, to give no cause for jealousy with other women, and made an earnest effort, since I was thoroughly scolded for it, to get to the house at the exact hour I say will be back for lunch. Not to telephone saying I will be late. But to stop anything that would make me late and get there.

Try to be thoughtful about Mary in every way I know how: especially in seeing she gets her morning sleep. But I cannot hear the telephone unless I am close to it and she *can* hear it. So if it rings early I am defeated on that.

Had always heard women like presents and to be made love to lovingly. But on the day after Mary had a homecoming present and we had made love lovingly and understandingly and, certainly, at some length I had the worst public bawling out I have ever received in my life followed by being waked */sic/* up at one thirty a.m. to hear it all over again. That night when I was listening to it I thought of saying, "I am a little deaf. Do I understand that you are thanking me for the little yellow convertible?"

The temptation to say this was strong enough so I got out of bed immediately to avoid starting answering. The only thing I have learned is that it is better not to answer at all. Women have no memory of what they have said to you. But if you finally say something bad in answer THAT is what was said during the evening, or how it was: the morning; the noon; or the night.

Right now the question is whether I should accept Mary as a scold and give up another illusion. Or whether I should ride along and learn not to give a damn. I know I can do that but it will mean losing something I value more than anything: our love and companionship.

The strange thing is that Mary will come to me and say what can I tell her to do that will make her a better partner and a better wife. But if I should ask her now to seriously think about this problem, or habit it is now, of scolding she would probably answer, "What? Me a scold? I have the kindest tongue and the best disposition in the world and who are you to say a horrible untrue thing like that." So I might as well let it go.

But maybe we could both have some luck and she would admit she has been scolding very much lately and very violently.

CEREBUS

NO. 253

APRIL 2000

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GOING HOME

BOOK ONE

Sudden Moves
(Cerebus 232 to
239)

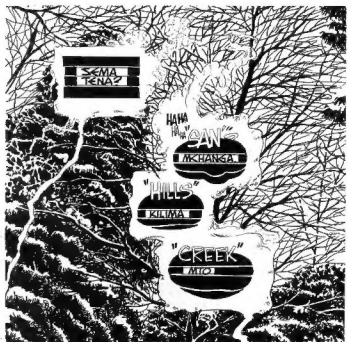
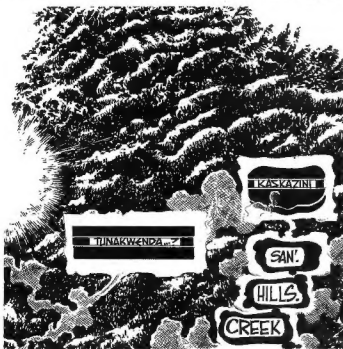
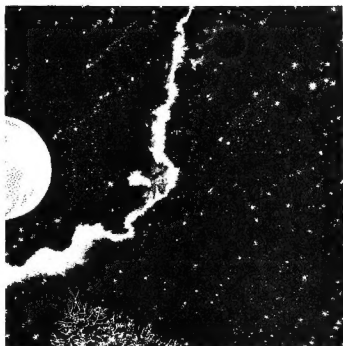
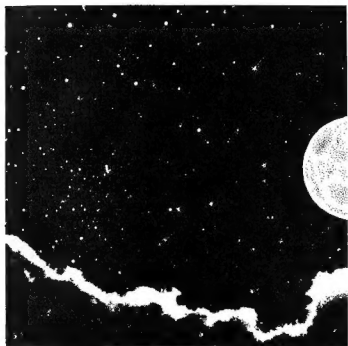
BOOK TWO

Fall and the
River
(Cerebus 240 to
250)

BOOK THREE

Form & Void
(Cerebus 251 to
265)

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SURE F-FEELS
LIKE W-WINTER

CRACK



WINTER'S STILL
A WAYS OFF

THIS IS JUST
AN EARLY
COLD SNAP

SNAP



HAM SAYS WE
SHOULD BE ABLE TO
GET ALL THE WAY TO
SAND HILLS CREEK
BEFORE THE REAL
SNOW FLIES

KR



BUT WHAT ABOUT
GETTING TRAPPED IN
A MOUNTAIN PASS BY
AN EARLY SNOWFALL
LIKE YOU

HA!



HAM ERNESTWAY
TRAPPED IN A MOUNTAIN
PASS? HA. THAT'LL
BE THE DAY

HA



?
H-HE'S JUST A W-
WRITER, HES?

JAKA.



HE'S
HAM.

ERNESTWAY.

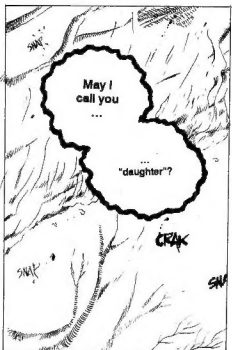
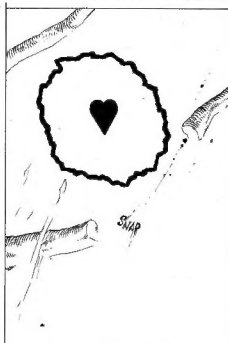
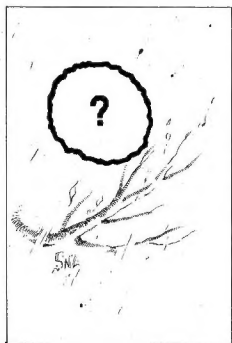
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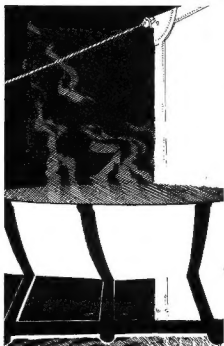
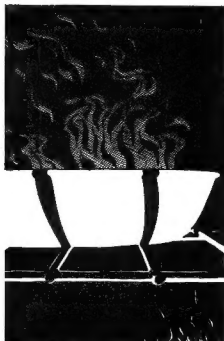


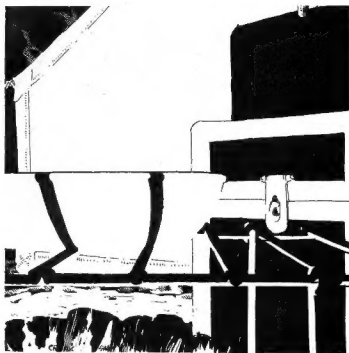
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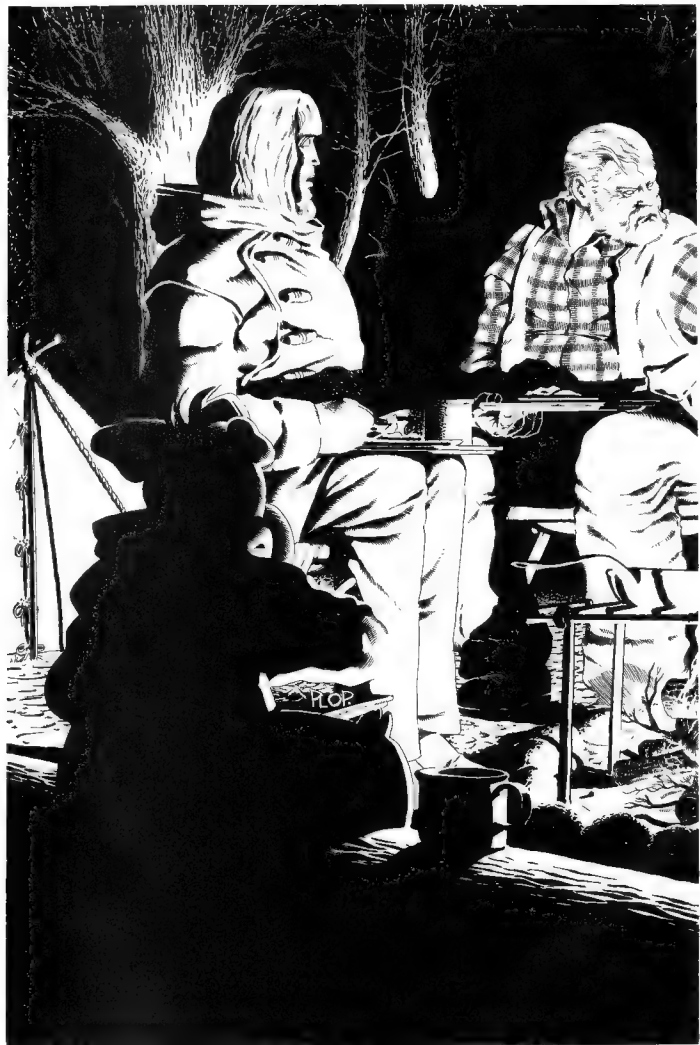
SNAP

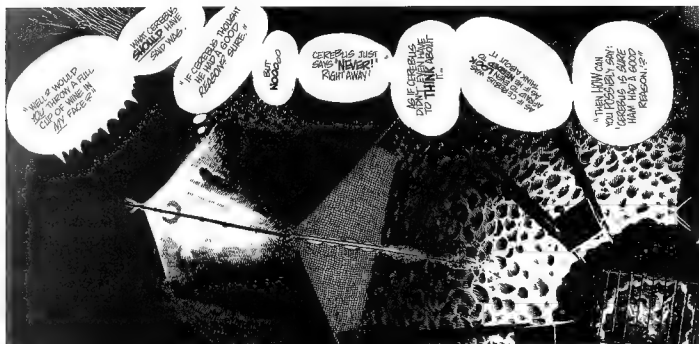


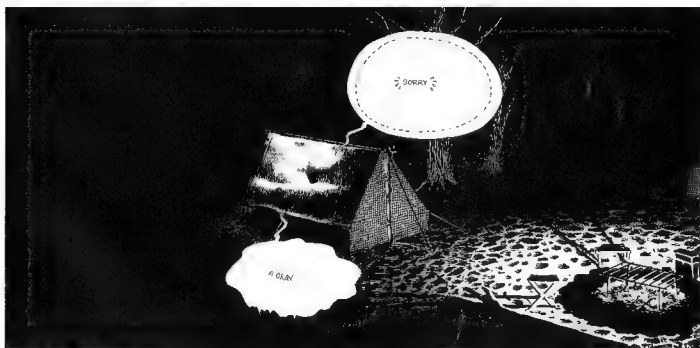


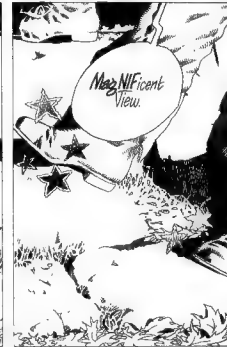
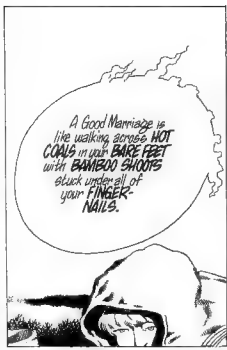
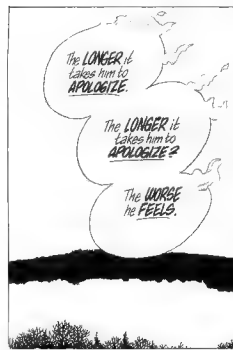
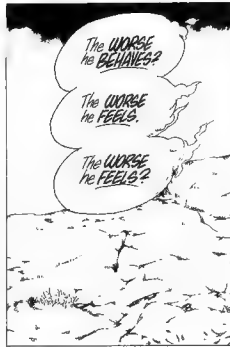
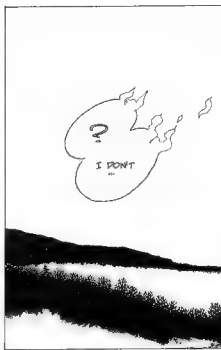


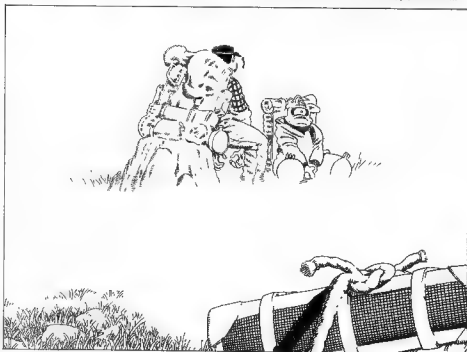
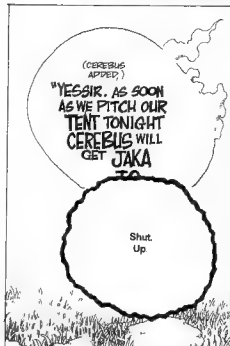
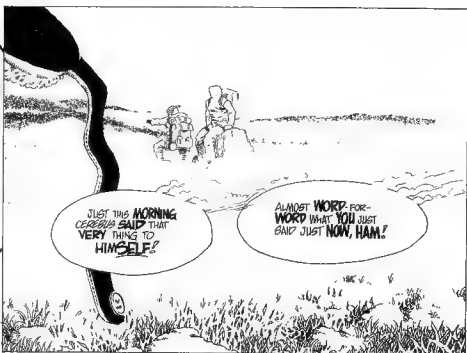


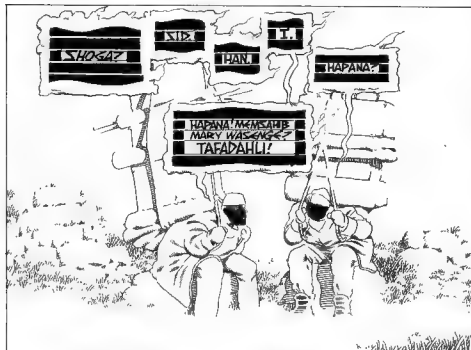
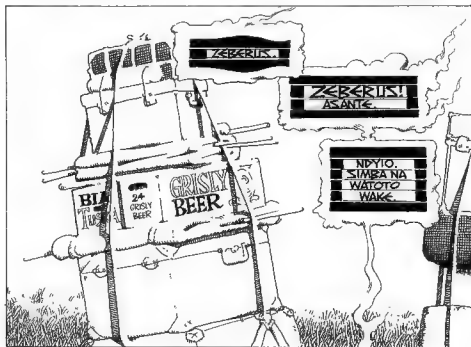
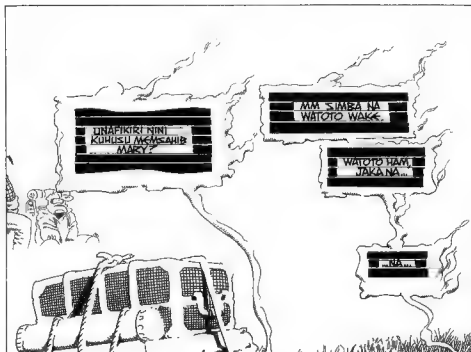














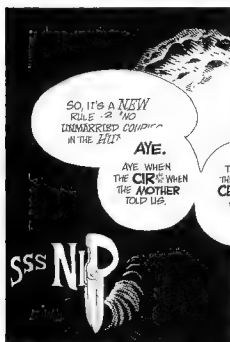
SNIP
MM. IT WOULD'VE
BEEN NICE TO STAY
ONE NIGHT IN ONE OF
THE HUNTING LODGES.

THE EXTERIORS
ARE BEAUTIFUL.



SNIP
AYE. BUT CEREBUS
DOESN'T WANT TO GET
MARRIED JUST YET
WE CAN

OH NO HE
EITHER.
EVER AGAIN.



SO, IT'S A NEW
RULE - NO
UNMARRIED COUPLES
IN THE HUT?

AYE.

AYE. WHEN
THE CIR WHEN
THE MOTHER
TOLD US.

THAT WAS
THE FIRST
CEREBUS
HEARD OF



ARE YOU SURE
HIM ISN'T
COMING?

I
TOLD YOU.
HE'S WATCHING
THE SUN
SET



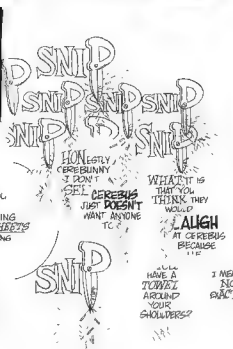
I CAN SEE
HIM THROUGH
THE REAR
TENT
FLAP

RELAX



AND MARY
ISN'T

I
TOLD YOU
SHE'S HANGING
UP SOME - SHEETS
OR SOMETHING



HONESTLY
CEREBUS
I DON'T
GET CEREBUS
JUST DOESN'T
WANT ANYONE
TO

WHAT IT IS
THAT YOU
THINK THEY
WOULD

LAUGH
AT CEREBUS
BECAUSE

SNIP
HAVE A
TOWEL
AROUND
YOUR
SHOULDERS?

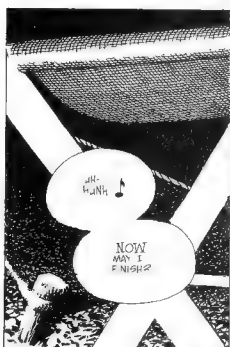
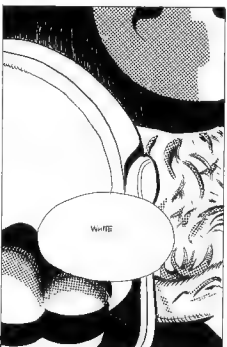
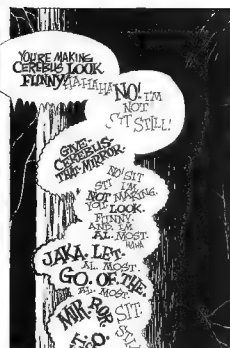
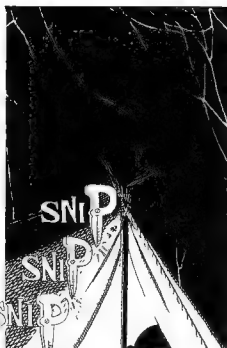
I MEAN IT'S
NOT
EXACTLY



BRUSH
BRUSH

CEREBUS
JUST DOESN'T
WANT

I KNOW. I KNOW.







TO HAM & HAM NOT

continued from last issue

The bush was very thick ahead and the ground was dry. The middle-aged gun-bearer was sweating heavily and Wilson had his hat down over his eyes and his red neck showed just ahead of Macomber. Suddenly the gun-bearer said something in Swahili to Wilson and ran forward.

"He's dead in there," Wilson said. "Good work," and he turned to grip Macomber's hand and as they shook hands, grinning at each other, the gun-bearer shouted wildly and they saw him coming out of the bush sideways, fast as a crab, and the bull coming, nose out, mouth tight closed, blood dripping, massive head straight out, coming in a charge, his little pig eyes bloodshot as he looked at them. Wilson, who was ahead, was kneeling shooting, and Macomber, as he fired, unhearing his shot in the roaring of Wilson's gun, saw fragments like slate burst from the huge boss of the horns, and the head jerked, he shot again at the wide nostrils and saw the horns jolt again and fragments fly, and he did not see Wilson now and, aiming carefully, shot again with the buffalo's huge bulk almost on him and his rifle almost level with the on-coming head, nose out, and he could see the little wicked eyes and the head started to lower and he felt a sudden white-hot, blinding flash explode inside his head and that was all he ever felt.

Wilson had ducked to one side to get in a shoulder shot. Macomber had stood solid and shot for the nose, shooting a touch high each time and hitting the heavy horns, splintering and chipping them like hitting a slate roof, and Mrs. Macomber, in the car, had shot at the buffalo with the 6.5 Mannlicher as it seemed about to gore Macomber and had hit her husband about two inches up and a little to one side of the base of his skull.

Francis Macomber lay now, face down, not two yards from where the buffalo lay on his side and his wife knelt over him with Wilson beside her.

"I wouldn't turn him over," Wilson said.

The woman was crying hysterically.

"I'd get back in the car," Wilson said. "Where's the rifle?"

She shook her head, her face contorted. The gun-bearer picked up the rifle.

"Leave it as it is," said Wilson. Then, "Go get Abdulla so that he may witness the manner of the accident."

He knelt down, took a handkerchief from his pocket, and spread it over Francis Macomber's crew-cropped head where it lay. The blood sank into the dry, loose earth.

Wilson stood up and saw the buffalo on his side, his legs out, his thinly haired belly crawling with ticks. "Hell of a good bull," his brain registered automatically. "A good fifty inches, or better. Better." He called to the driver and told him to spread a blanket over the body and stay by it. Then he walked over to the motor car where the woman sat crying in the corner.

"That was a pretty thing to do," he said in a toneless voice. "He would have left you too."

"Stop it," she said.

"Of course it's an accident," he said. "I know that."

"Stop it," she said.

"Don't worry," he said. "There will be a certain amount of unpleasantness but I will have some photographs taken that will be very useful at the inquest. There's the testimony of the gun-bearers and the driver too. You're perfectly all right."

"Stop it," she said.

"There's a hell of a lot to be done," he said. "And I'll have to send a truck off to the lake to wireless for a plane to take the three of us into Nairobi. Why didn't you poison him? That's what they do in England."

"Stop it. Stop it. Stop it," the woman cried.

Wilson looked at her with his flat blue eyes.

"I'm through now," he said. "I was a little angry. I'd begun to like your husband."

"Oh, please stop it," she said. "Please stop it."

"That's better," Wilson said. "Please is much better. Now I'll stop."

I really do allow of the possibility that it's just me, but having seen a handful of Kennedy Zeitgeist connections come tumbling out at me from Scott Fitzgerald's Pat Hobby stories and elsewhere, I did find it (literally) breathtaking to read "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" and find—what seems to me to be—a jumbled-up description of November 22, 1963: "The only shot is straight into the nose. The only other shot is into his chest or, if you're to one side, into the neck or the shoulders" (that is, from the grassy knoll and the mysterious entry wound marked by the Parkland Hospital doctors just above the right shoulder blade which was nowhere mentioned in the Bethesda Naval Hospital autopsy); "the Mannlicher" (the same brand of rifle found in the School Book Depository); "They've finished skinning out that head now" (where is JFK's brain?); "As the car moved slowly across the open space toward the island of brushy trees" (Dealy Plaza and the trees on the grassy knoll); "saw fragments like slate burst" ("and the head jerked" "and the head started to lower" (seen the Zapruder film lately?); "a sudden white-hot, blinding flash explode[d] inside his head and that was all he ever

felt" (I would imagine) "and had hit her husband about two inches up and a little to one side of the base of his skull" (the right occipital region, marked as an exit wound by the Parkland Hospital doctors and not mentioned in the Bethesda Naval Hospital autopsy report); "I'd get back in the car" (Secret Service agent Clint Hill to Mrs. Kennedy on the rear hood of the car?); "There will be a certain amount of unpleasantness but I will have some photographs taken that will be very useful at the inquest" (the faked autopsy photos that caused such a stir a few years back?).

1936? 1963?

What does it all mean?

Well, I'm not sure.

Just thought I'd mention it.

VII

Since there's really only one other Hemingway Zeitgeist connection with Kennedy that jumped out at me, I thought I'd put it here a little out of place for those who are interested. After Hemingway's death in 1961, there was a dinner at the White House for the American Nobel laureates. Papa was dead, but Mary got an invitation. Nice gesture, if you think about it. Here is her account from *How It Was* (pg. 651—which puts Mary a good 200 pages past Papa's longest book):

President Kennedy had seated Mrs. Marshall on his right, me on his left and Dr. Carl Anderson, a winner in physics from California, on my left. After preliminary niceties I suggested to our host that the U.S. government's position toward Cuba was stupid, unrealistic and worse, ineffective, especially—sotto voce—since the Bay of Pigs fiasco.

President Kennedy was looking irked and impatient. As the dinner courses were changed, he turned to Mrs. Marshall. I turned to Dr. Anderson and asked, "If an enemy were to bomb this room at this moment, how much, do you think, of our technological knowledge would be lost?"

"Not very much," Dr. Anderson said. "As you may have observed, most of us fellows here are elders. All those young scientists, working away in our laboratories, already know what we learned; they'll go forward with their research."

I was pinching salt from the President's salt dish, and when he turned away for a moment from Mrs. Marshall, I said, "I could jump into Cuba, you know. The Cubans liked my husband, and I know Fidel."

"Have you read Katherine Anne Porter's Ship of Fools?" the President asked.

"No. I'm sorry. If I talked to Fidel..."

"You are rated as politically unreliable," said the President.

"You haven't checked M.I. 5 [sic]," said I, and subsided. I had never been a knee-deep member of any political party. The Robert Kennedys drove me to Bill Walton's house, where I was staying.

I can't remember the last time that I laughed so long and so hard. Can you imagine anyone having a more disproportionate sense of self? "*President Kennedy was looking irked and impatient.*" Well, surprise, surprise, *surprise!* He chivalrously seats Hemingway's little blonde widow next to himself at dinner and finds out he's sitting next to James Bond. "*I could jump into Cuba*"?! To be stupid and fatuous enough to say such a thing to the President of the United States at a dinner where you have been invited *only* because you are someone's widow... Well, that's one thing. But then to relate the conversation—deadpan—in a *book!* What insolence! What temerity! What a gender! "*You haven't checked M.I.5 [sic].*" Gosh, Mrs. Hemingway, that's true. I just have the resources of the National Security Council, the C.I.A. and the F.B.I. to draw on. I really *should've* called 10 Downing Street and asked if, as a special favour to me, they could dig up their *security clearances* for *Time* magazine correspondents from 1944!"

"Bobby? Get her out of here. You and Ethel drive her to wherever she's staying."

"Sure, Jack. What's up?"

"I'll tell you when you get back. Otherwise you'll lock her in the trunk and drive her into the Potomac, and we don't need the bad publicity right now."

Pages 409-413 - The two largest files in my Hemingway research are those labelled "Lying" and "Garden of Eden." The latter we will be getting to later in "Form & Void." The former is like a virus which spreads from figure to figure in Papa's entourage or court or whatever you want to call it. The dialogue here is from A. E. Hotchner's *Papa Hemingway* (Random House, New York, 1966, pgs. 285-286), recounting a phone conversation between "Hotch" and Hemingway on April 18, 1961. To emphasize that Ham is actually thinking to himself here, I have eliminated Hotchner's rejoinder after "...but I can't get it down": *I said some terrible inanity like, "Well, it's good that you're that far" and after "...but I had to scratch it": "Then they'll do it in the spring."* The subject, again, is the never-completed manuscript for *A Moveable Feast*.

As the aggrieved Widow Queen, Mary caused Hotchner (whose place in the entourage or court originated in his role as the primary adapter of Hemingway's works for television and movies) no end of legal trouble over his book, venturing the opinion that, had Papa known that Hotchner was working on a book, "he would've killed him." That is as it may be. Along the same line of hyperbole, I think it safe to say that if Papa suspected Mary intended to write *How It Was*, he would've held her over for torture. Everyone accuses Hotchner of lying in his book. A Hemingway researcher gets very used to reading the accusation directed against everyone except Papa for whose compulsive lying everyone in his former entourage or court makes excuses.

Page 411 - Ham's belt buckle here requires a little ex-

planation. One of Hemingway's proudest possessions was a belt buckle looted from a dead German soldier during World War II. Papa claimed that he killed the soldier himself. Those who were in his proximity during the war dispute the idea that Papa killed *anyone*, let alone the twenty or fifty Germans he claimed to have killed. Aside from the fact that journalists are *forbidden* to take an active role in combat under the terms of the Geneva Convention, the only possible "kill" Papa *might* have been in on was throwing a hand grenade into a basement where some German soldiers were hiding when they refused to surrender. It is a remote possibility, at best.

Anyway, the legend inscribed on the looted belt read: "Gott Mit Uns"—God With Us.

The Hebrew for God With Us—*Immanu El*, or *Immanuel*—appears only three times in the Bible. In Isaiah 7:14 it is part of Isaiah's warning to Ahaz, the king of Judah who is being pressured to join Israel and Syria against Assyria:

*Therefore the Lord himselfe shal giue you a signe:
Behold, a Virgine shall conceiue and beare a Sonne
and thou, O Virgine shall call his name Immanuel.*

At least that's how the King James Bible translates it. In fact the Hebrew word used, *alma*, means "an unmarried woman." Had Isaiah intended to say "virgin," he would've used *betula* and accompanied it with "and a man had not known her" (as in Genesis 24:16) or by itself if he intended "betrothed virgin" (Deuteronomy 22:23). It's pretty widely accepted that he would *avoid* the term since—after Joel 1:8—a tradition had arisen that *betula* could also refer to a married woman (a very, very specific kind of married woman, right, "ladies"?). It seems to me, from the context, that the Lord is telling Ahaz through Isaiah that if Judah chooses to "go it alone," God will be on his side. Ahaz takes it to mean that he should side with Assyria instead. Which leads to Isaiah 8:8:

*And hee (Assyria) shall passe through Judah, he
shall overflow and goe ouer, he shall reach euen to
the necke; and the fulnesse of the breadth of thy land
shall be the stretching out of his wings, O Immanuel.*

D'OH! (With Homer Simpson as Ahaz.)

For some reason Matthew picked up on this for his Gospel (Matthew 1:23), which made me wonder (as I'm sure it's made many a rabbi wonder for twenty centuries now) why no one said to Matthew, "Uh, Matthew? Mary called him Jesus. She didn't call him Immanuel." (Or "Emmanuel," as Matthew would have it.)

Sorry for the digression, but it gets unattractive from here. Given Hemingway's status as an avowed atheist (which everyone seemed to be in public life in the middle part of the 20th century), I thought the belt buckle inappropriate to Ham, so I replaced it with "cotsies," Papa's "too-cute-for-words" euphemism for cats (which

he encouraged to infest his house in Key West and the Finca Vigia as they infest both locations to this day). Without further comment (allowing the reader to draw his or her own unattractive conclusions) let me quote from Carlos Baker's *Ernest Hemingway: A Life Story* (The Literary Guild, London, 1969, pages 515-516):

His lifelong scorn of 'head doctors' reappeared in his maltreatment of a divisional psychiatrist named Major Maskin. One night the doctor invited himself into Ernest's billet and began to ask his probing, subtle questions. Ernest put on a sober face, saying that he needed Maskin's advice. He was troubled about his cats at Finca Vigia. He had twenty or thirty and kept getting more. 'The little bastard was fascinated,' said Ernest. 'His eyes were bugging out.' Many people liked cats, said the doctor. That was no problem. 'With me it is,' said Hemingway. 'My problem is that I can't seem to stop having intercourse with them.'

And then this from Hemingway's own unfinished manuscript published posthumously as *Islands in the Stream* (Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1970, pp. 224-225):

Boise [Boise was the name of Hemingway's favourite "cotsie" at Finca Vigia] came into the room and jumped up onto his lap. He jumped beautifully and could leap, without effort showing, to the top of the high chest of drawers in the big bedroom. Now having leaped moderately and neatly, he settled down on Thomas Hudson's lap and made loving pushes with his forepaws.

"I'm looking at the pictures, Boy. You'd be better off if you liked pictures."

Who knows though he may get as much from leaping and from night hunting as I get from the pictures, Thomas Hudson thought. It is a damned shame he can't see them though. You can't tell. He might have frightful taste in pictures.

"I wonder who you'd like, Boy. Probably the Dutch period when they painted such wonderful still lifes of fish and oysters and game. Hey, lay off me there. This is the day time. You're not supposed to do that sort of thing in the day time."

Boise continued with his lovemaking and Thomas Hardy pushed him onto his side to quiet him.

"You have to observe a few decencies, Boy," he said. "I haven't even gone out to see the other cats, to please you."

Boise was happy and Thomas Hudson felt the purr in his throat with his fingers.

"Gott Mit Uns"? Mmm. I don't think so. How about "Cotsies Mit Uns"?

Pages 413-420 - In my experience, atheists tend to replace their more natural faith in God with faith in medicine and psychiatry. If I thought that Hemingway was

any great loss to the world of literature, his last days would be a source of sombre contemplation for me. As it is, it just seems like a very conventional story of the natural comeuppance of a compulsive liar, boozier, husband, and...

There must be a word for it. Not "hypochondriac" or "death wish" or "accident prone," but a word which encompasses all three? From the time of his wounding in World War I (his leg was hit by shrapnel as he delivered candy and cigarettes to the Italian troops at the front), Ernest discovered that he could milk a lot of attention and admiration out of getting wounded. And so he spent much of the rest of his life getting wounded. On the back of *Death in the Afternoon*, a flinty-eyed Hem squints out at the reader with a large and recent gash on his forehead. It is nowhere stated that he sustained this wound while sitting on the toilet in the middle of the night, sleepily trying to pull the flush chain and instead pulling a chain attached to the skylight in the bathroom, bringing a shower of broken glass and metal down on his head. That sort of thing. Someone ventured the opinion that Papa spent more time in his sick bed than any other equally healthy person the individual had known. Papa, of course, shrugged everything off and carried on no matter what current injury he had most recently welcomed into his life. In the case of the many concussions he suffered over the years, his...mental instability?... in his later years might be attributable to excessive drinking in a concussed state. A medical no-no known to cause permanent brain damage. His inability to distinguish between reality and fantasy, his compulsive lying, would be a bad supplement to such brain damage. To whatever extent a compulsive liar is capable of distinguishing (inwardly) between his own lies and the truth, even marginal brain damage could hurl that individual into a world of terrifying paranoia, which is what seems to have happened to Hemingway after January 1954—which I'm getting to, I promise.

The genuinely amusing thing for someone like myself who finds almost everything about marriage amusing, is that: sixty years old and with his mind deteriorating, ravaged by paranoid fantasies of persecution, and fried by a couple of dozen (seriously, a couple of *dozen*) electroshock treatments, Papa was left contemplating his fourth wife Mary. Mary, with whom he had had and was having a tumultuous marriage. Mary, with whom he had screaming arguments and battles of varying shapes, sizes, and duration. Mary, who was, herself, being ravaged by a severe menopause which caused her moods to soar across spectrums of giddiness to unreasoning rage—without her being consciously aware of any change in herself either at the time or in retrospect.

Even through his own ravaged perceptions, I believe Papa recognized that—if the doctors were, at some point, to decide that he was unfit to be responsible for his own welfare—it was Mary who would decide the circumstances under which he would live the rest of his natural life. Medicated to the eyeballs, institutionalized, electroshocked until his brain melted into gray Jell-O, whatever.

The doctors and Mary would decide.

Sorry, I find that incredibly funny. Maybe if you were divorced or single, you would too.

Page 426 - Hemingway's trademark non sequitur which he addressed to no one in particular apropos nothing. "How do you like it now, gentlemen?" was unveiled by Lillian Ross in her 1950 *New Yorker* profile of Hemingway, which has just been reprinted as a booklet by Modern Library in New York, including a new afterword by the authoress. It's really the best Hemingway portrait by far, to me, burying his official and unofficial biographers. Norman Mailer prefers Gregory Hemingway's *Papa*. I seldom disagree with Norman Mailer about literary matters, but this time I do.

I believe "How do you like it now, gentlemen?" has its origin in a vitriolic response to the critic Max Eastman in 1933. From Carlos Baker's biography, pg. 295:

What he (Eastman) and his friends couldn't abide was the fact that Ernest was an indubitable man, that he could 'beat the shit out of any of them,' and finally, that he could write. That last was the hardest fact for them to swallow. But 'old Papa' would make them like it...(emphasis mine)

I think, from 1933 on, "How do you like it now, gentlemen?" was Hemingway's way of keeping his vitriolic loathing of all reviewers and critics uppermost in his mind.

Tangentially, there was this girl named Sue that I slept with for a period of time—Little Sue I called her (never could remember her last name). Little Sue had the same body type as Mary Hemingway. Va-va-va-voom curves, but miniaturized, an overly large head in proportion to the rest of her and somewhat dwarfish legs. Well, these are the sorts of things you dredge up when you're drawing a new character and all you have to work with are a handful of photographs from various books. I was picturing Little Sue naked while I was drawing Mary the first few times when I suddenly remembered Little Sue's trademark "line" which she threw in here, there, and everywhere—especially when she had been drinking:

"How do you like me now?"

Creepey, eh?

16 February 00 - I have just tonight spoken with Eddie Campbell, the marvelous cartoonist and fellow self-publisher who has scored such a great success with the collected *From Hell* trade paperback. He told me that he has rated *Going Home* part one as one of the greatest comic-book stories of all time, which is a very nice thing for him to say and to put in print for everyone who reads his wonderful comic book, *Bacchus*, to see. However, he says that he is now having second thoughts, having read the first installment of "Form & Void." "You leave Hemingway alone," warned Eddie speaking to me from his home in Australia, which is a country which is far away. "Hemingway is all right." He then quoted to me a

wonderful bit of dialogue from *The Sun Also Rises* which Eddie had printed as one of his "Thoughts for the Day," which is a marvelous feature which is on the inside front cover of each issue of his wonderful comic book, *Bacchus*. I laughed because I remembered the exchange, which was very funny. However, I must point out, as I did not when I was talking with Eddie, but as I am doing now: I did not say that Hemingway did not recognize a good and a funny line when he heard it and I did not say that Hemingway did not know enough to put a good and a funny line which he had heard in a bar in one of his stories. But there is a large difference between doing that, to me, and being an actual writer instead of a glorified typist. I do, however, now owe my good friend Eddie Campbell one for accidentally reminding me to return to using Hemingway's flat midwestern voice which he stole from Gertrude Stein and Sherwood Anderson's flat New England voice and to stop writing these notes and instead to just type them as if I were recovering from having several too many margaritas at the Florida last night.

Eddie told me that he can live with me being a misogynist, but he cannot abide the thought of my being a philistine. I gathered from that that Eddie did not understand that I meant all references to "foolish Dave Sim the evil misogynist" ironically and that I consider myself neither foolish nor evil nor a misogynist. I am a non-feminist, which only in the pussy-whipped world of the very late-20th century can be construed as misogyny. I don't hate women. I don't even hate feminists. I am disgusted by feminists as I am by people who, for example, drink way too much and try to persuade you of their viewpoint by repeating it over and over and over until you want to say to them as I want to say to feminists, "It is *not* that I do not *understand* what you are saying. I *understand* what you are saying, but I think you are *wrong* and I will *continue* to think you are wrong no matter *how many times* you repeat the *same* stupid things that you *keep* repeating," except in the case of *drunks* it is usually a matter of twenty minutes or an hour and it is confined to the corner of a room at a party or a section of a bar, but with *feminists* it has now been going on for thirty years and no one else is allowed to say anything *except* feminists in the newspaper, on the radio, on the television, in the classroom, and everywhere else except, as an example, in a self-published comic book where they are unable to stop you or in this case me, God willing, so far.

When I told Eddie I do not consider myself a philistine either, Eddie told me that I should also as well not pick on Picasso and that Picasso is a great artist, and I told Eddie the same story that I have told my friend Tim Williams, the painter, several times: Let's say someone is holding a gun to your head and he tells you that you have to do an exact copy of one of these paintings in a week. And one of the paintings is a Norman Rockwell *Saturday Evening Post* cover and one of the paintings is a Picasso. It does not matter which one, as long as the Picasso is one of the ones

that is just a geometric patchwork of painted shapes. So, any Picasso from Cubism onward. The Rockwell can be any *Saturday Evening Post* cover. Now, with a gun at your head and your life on the line, which one are you going to copy? Exactly. Why? Because pretty much anyone can do it. It takes no talent. It is the Emperor's New Clothes.

Before my good friend Eddie Campbell could interrupt, I met him halfway as I always meet my good friend Tim Williams, the painter, halfway. I told him that I have no problem with people who like what Picasso did and who call them paintings or art with a straight face. Some people eat peanut butter on pizza. What I do have a problem with is equating what Picasso did with what (as a fine example) Norman Rockwell did, since what the one did was easy and stupid and what the other did was difficult and admirable.

Before my good friend Eddie Campbell could interrupt again, I added, as I add with my good friend Tim Williams, the painter: I have an even *bigger* problem with those people who try to *equate* Norman Rockwell with Picasso-from-Cubism-onward as if there is any foundation for discussion for anyone with two eyes to see; a still *bigger* problem with those people who take the *concession* that Picasso-from-Cubism-onward *might* be creativity as well (albeit on a much lower plane of creativity) and who then reciprocate by claiming that Rockwell was a "mere commercial illustrator" and who attempt to elevate whatever it is that Picasso did not only *above* its sensible place in the artistic pecking order, but also and as well *above* Norman Rockwell; and a *still even yet bigger* problem with those who attempt to elevate a floor-to-ceiling canvas consisting of nothing but a giant orange rectangle with a white dot in the middle *also* as well above Norman Rockwell's pictures. To me, anyone who is that stupid is not worth discussing art or Art with. When you are willing to talk sensibly (as my good friend Eddie Campbell and I proceeded to do) about the finer distinctions between the British Academy's idea in the Victorian era of what constituted a good painting and how they were foolish to reject the Impressionists' paintings out of hand as "unfinished colour sketches" and "ideas for paintings" and to discuss Ruskin's "libel" or libel or Libel in accusing Whistler with his Nocturnes of "flinging a paint pot in the face of the public," then I am willing to see where and what you place higher or lower than I do as to what constitutes art and what constitutes Art in the world of painting. However, if you want to talk to me about Cubism and floor-to-ceiling canvases that are one big orange rectangle with a white dot in the middle of it, then, excuse me, but all I can do is laugh and turn away after telling you to go and waste someone *else's* time, because, to me, you are like a drunk in a bar or a feminist: "It is *not* that I do not *understand* what you are saying. I *understand* what you are saying. But I think you are *wrong* and I will *continue* to think you are wrong no matter *how many times* you repeat the *same* stupid things that you *keep* repeating."

